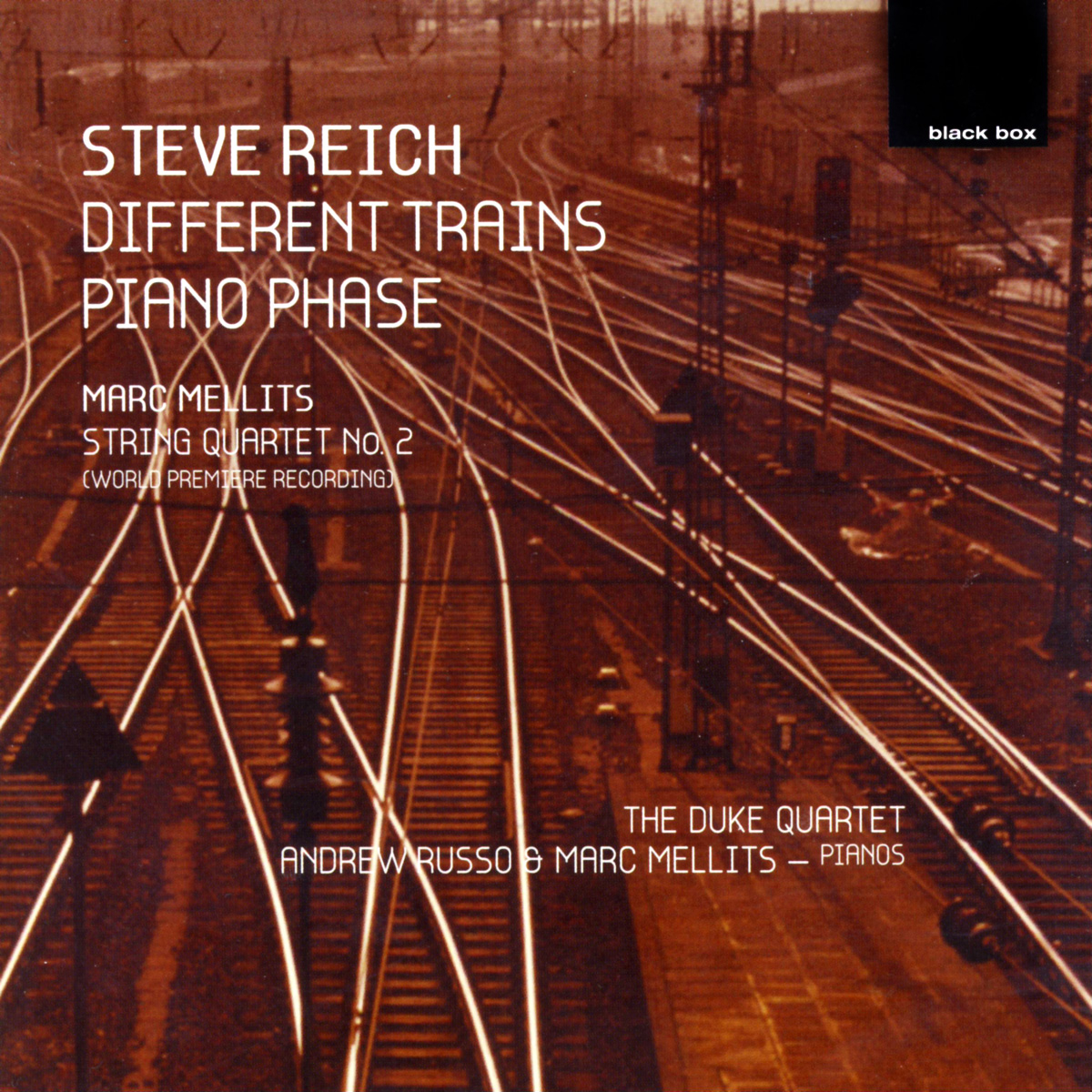

black box
STEVE REICH
DIFFERENT TRAINS
PIANO PHASE
MARC MELLITS
STRING QUARTET No. 2
(WORLD PREMIERE RECORDING)
THE DUKE QUARTET
ANDREW RUSSO & MARC MELLITS — PIANOS

**STEVE REICH (b. 1936)**

DIFFERENT TRAINS for string quartet and tape (1988)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Track 1 | America – Before the War | 9.00 |
| Track 2 | Europe – During the War | 7.30 |
| Track 3 | After the War | 10.28 |
| Track 4 | PIANO PHASE (1967) | 19.33 |

**MARC MELLITS (b. 1966)**

STRING QUARTET No. 2 (2004) *

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Track 5 | Groove Canon | 2.40 |
| Track 6 | Mara's Toys | 5.09 |
| Track 7 | December 1989 | 3.33 |
| Track 8 | Groove Machine | 3.56 |

Total Time 61.53

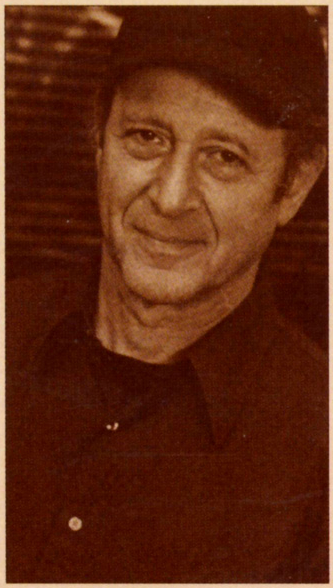
THE DUKE QUARTET *(Tracks 1-3, 5-8)*
Louisa Fuller, Rick Koster – violins
John Metcalfe – viola
Sophie Harris – cello
ANDREW RUSSO & MARC MELLITS – pianos *(Track 4)*

World premiere recording *

Tracks 1-3 and 5-8 produced by Harvey Brough and The Duke Quartet, engineered by Steve Pelluet and edited by David Cossin, and Mick Hatch & Raphael Mouterade at Floating Earth. Recorded at Lansdowne Studios, London on 6, 8, 10 and 11 January 2006. Track 4 produced by Chris Craker and Andrew Russo and engineered by Chris Craker, edited by David Cossin. Recorded at De Angelis Studios, Manlius, New York on 10 May, 2005. Piano Technician: Nick Smith. Mixed and mastered by Mike Hatch at Floating Earth. Tracks 1-3 published by Hendon Music Ltd. Track 4 published by Universal. Tracks 5-8 published by Dacia Music. Design: www.designbyceh.com.

**STEVE REICH** was born in New York City on 3 October 1936. Although Reich's first instrument was piano, the main focus of his pre-college years was the study of drumming. At Cornell University, Reich studied philosophy. He then pursued graduate work in composition at Juilliard and Mills College, studying with Luciano Berio and Darius Milhaud.

Many people consider Reich's early aesthetic to follow a path started in the 60s by La Monte Young and Terry Riley, known today as Minimalism. While supporting himself driving a cab, Reich was very active in the downtown New York arts scene, performing in art galleries and lofts, helping to organize the 1964 premiere of Riley's *In C*, and experimenting with tape manipulation. He experimented with a process known as phasing, whereby two identical tape loops are launched in perfect unison, move out of phase with one another, and continue through a whole series of phase possibilities before landing back in unison with each other. Reich created several works with tape loops in this period, among them *It's Gonna Rain* and *Come Out*. He began applying the phasing principle to acoustic instruments in pieces like *Piano Phase*, *Four Organs* and *Violin Phase*. In 1970, Reich spent a year studying with a master drummer in Accra, Ghana. This experience led to the composition of *Drumming*, a large-scale work which many see as the climax of Reich's 'phase period'.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The rest of the 70s saw a transition from the pure Minimalism with which Reich was working into an orchestral style which was heavily influenced by his study of gamelan music. 1976's *Music for Eighteen Musicians* is a particular highlight of these years, especially when performed in the original version requiring the musicians to exchange instruments with one another throughout the performance.

The 80s saw a period of emergence for Reich's works on commercial recordings. A number of works for different instruments with tape tracks were created, including *Vermont Counterpoint*, *New York Counterpoint*, *Electronic Counterpoint* and, in 1988, the monumental *Different Trains*.

**DIFFERENT TRAINS** – In writing his first work for string quartet, Reich went back to ideas explored in his early tape pieces. Deciding to allow recordings of human speech to serve as the basis for the musical materials, he contemplated a subject for the work. Reich thought back to his childhood, recalling his parents' divorce and the subsequent move of his mother to Los Angeles. Due to a shared custody arrangement, the very young Reich often found himself making the cross-country trip by train with his governess Virginia. As the time period of these events was the late 1930s and early 1940s, Reich, who is Jewish, contemplated the types of trains he could have found himself upon had he been born in Europe instead. Taking these two scenarios into account, Reich proceeded to make the following recordings: his governess Virginia, then in her 70s, reminiscing about their train voyages; 80 year-old Laurence Davis, a retired Pullman porter from the New York-Los Angeles route, reminiscing about his life; three Holocaust survivors, about the same age as Reich, talking about their childhood experiences; sounds of European and American trains from the 1930s and 40s.

Armed with these collected recordings, Reich carefully chose small verbal phrases which possessed melodic and rhythmic nuance, translated them into clearly pitched musical phrases and scored these phrases for the different voices of a string quartet texture. The quartet performs in real time with a tape track containing the vocal phrases, some train sounds and pre-recorded music performed by three additional string quartets. In this recording, the Duke Quartet has chosen to perform the music for the three pre-recorded string quartet tracks as well the live track, a rare and admirable feat!

With the three movements titled 'America – Before the War', 'Europe – During the War', and 'After the War', Reich views this piece as having created a new type of musical documentary form. Thus began a new direction in his music.

**PIANO PHASE** – 1967's *Piano Phase* is the ultimate example of what we today call Minimalist music. That is to say music which presents gradually evolving compositional processes within a highly repetitive tapestry. Reich's Minimalist music lies in contrast to Western music, given Western music's priorities on harmonic motion, motivic development and key modulation. Mr. Reich himself has advocated the use of compositional processes which are clearly audible to the listener, and believes

that a closely detailed listening process must happen extremely gradually – like the slow trickling of sand through an hour glass. Thus, the ideal result for this kind of Minimalist music is that in which the listener enters a trance state, mesmerized by the kaleidoscope of shifting sonic patterns.

*Piano Phase* is the first instrumental piece in which Reich explored the principle of moving a rhythmic pattern out of phase with itself. Structured in three related parts, the piece begins with two pianists presenting a twelve-note rhythmic pattern in unison semiquavers. After the pattern is well established, Piano I gradually speeds up until it has moved one semiquaver ahead of the fixed pulse of Piano II. The players then establish the new combination, after which Piano I speeds up gradually to arrive two semiquavers ahead of the fixed pulse. This cycle moves through 13 phases, finally arriving back in the original unisons.

Piano I now fades out, allowing Piano II to contract the original twelve-note pattern into an eight-note pattern. The lead part now fades back in, however with an eight-note pattern of its own. Though the two patterns are built within the same mode, the difference in pitches allows for some beautiful harmonic variations throughout the second part. A series of nine phases is executed, exploring each possible combination of the two patterns before returning to the original combination. This time it is Piano II that fades out, leaving Piano I to contract its eight-note pattern into a four-note pattern.

Piano II returns to launch the work's third part, fading in with the same unison four-note pattern that Piano I has since established. The two pianists pass through four phases, landing back in unison. Following one last series of unison repetitions, this music ceases with the same immediate energy that it began.

**MARC MELLITS: STRING QUARTET NUMBER TWO** – Marc Mellits, as pianist and composer, serves as a bridge between the three works on this record. A protegée of Steve Reich, Mr. Mellits' String Quartet Number Two was written in 2004 for the Kronos Quartet. This four movement work shows the influence of Steve Reich, yet is distinctly Mellits in flavour. While both composers thrive on the principle of 'groove', the Reich grooves tend to hypnotize while the Mellits grooves rock out.

Movement One is a 'Groove Canon'. Solo cello gets the groove into place, creating an ostinato foundation for its three partners. A repetitive rhythmic canon is established and then cycled through a series of modulations. The cycle leads back to its original key and simply ceases.

'Mara's Toys' has a structure as rhapsodic as its name. Set in a ternary form, three ideas make up outer sections' material – an aggressive minor-key groove in parallel fifths, a major-key fanfare motif, and a high enery, modal, funk bass groove. It is this bass groove that one must pay attention to, as it evolves and eventually takes charge. A tart, pizzicato middle section briefly impedes this evolution, but the funk is not to be denied. Building in volume and texture throughout the recap, the funk groove swells into a *fortissimo* canon and a climactic conclusion.

'December 1989' is reminiscent of 'Blue' from Mellits' 1998 work *Fruity Pebbles*. A melancholic and nostalgic four voice chorale proceeds with each voice changing pitch on alternating beats. The top voice transforms into a descant, floating above the chorale, which now moves all of its voices in simultanaeity towards the slow, rising harmonies of its last phrase.

'Groove Machine' is an adaptation of 'Machine V' from Mellits' 2000 work *Five Machines*. A funky, bass-heavy groove sets the tone for aggresive canonic motion in the upper voices. The pizzicato middle section introduces a second theme, which alternates between even and odd meters. Ultimately the groove returns and drives the music towards its rock'n roll finale.

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**THE DUKE QUARTET**
Louisa Fuller & Rick Koster – violins
John Metcalfe – viola
Sophie Harris – cello

Renowned for its passionate performances, both live and recorded, the Duke Quartet has established itself as one of Europe's most dynamic ensembles. The group's versatility and fearless approach to music-making has led them into an unequalled range of projects including pop, education, dance and their own compositions all of which have been highly acclaimed for their quality of musicianship, technique and diversity of repertoire.

The Duke Quartet's passion for the new is evident in their commitment to commissioning and performing new works from composers such as Graham Fitkin, Deirdre Gribben, Emily Hall, Rolf Hind, Michael Nyman, Joby Talbot, Andrew Toovey and Kevin Volans. This, together with the players' love of the traditional string quartet repertoire, has helped The Dukes to become one of the most sought-after string quartets. They have been giving recitals for over 15 years, becoming a vibrant part of the national chamber music scene, performing in the UK's top venues and festivals with such artists as Marc-André Hamelin, Alexander Baillie and Jessye Norman and broadcasting regularly on BBC Radio 3. Their international schedule has taken them to countries including Columbia, the Yemen, South Africa and Japan.

The quartet's outstanding musicianship can by heard on their many CDs. The Dukes' debut recording, featuring works by Barber, Dvořák and Philip Glass, was selected at the 1995 Cannes Classical Music Awards as one of the world's top debut CDs of the year and their disc featuring Berg's *Lyric Suite* and Schoenberg's *Verklärte Nacht* received glowing reviews for its intense musicality and technical excellence. The 2002 Black Box recording of music by Kevin Volans, with whom they have had a close working relationship for many years, received a Gramophone Award nomination for best contemporary recording (BBM 1069).

Following The Duke's work on Morrissey's first solo album *Viva Hate*, the quartet has developed into one of the most in-demand string quartets in the pop industry. Their unique and rich timbre,

coupled with intuitive arrangements from violist John Metcalfe, has flavoured music from many top bands including Blur, the Cranberries and The Corrs. They have worked many times with the Pretenders, collaborating on an acoustic greatest hits album, *Isle of View*, and touring the UK and the USA. In 2004, the quartet toured Australia with the Dixie Chicks.

The Duke Quartet has enjoyed a long association with the renowned Belgian dance company Rosas, with whom they have performed worldwide. In 2003 they toured Europe to celebrate Rosas' 20th anniversary. Education and outreach work is an important part of the quartet's work and they have given over 400 workshops and concerts in schools, colleges, hospitals, prisons and universities.

In 2004 the Duke Quartet performed the complete Bartók cycle at Bromsgrove Festival, toured Portugal under the auspices of the British Council, took part in the BBC's John Cage Festival and Manchester's QuartetFest, and as part of their on-going commitment to new music, premiered seven works in one evening during the opening of the 60th Cheltenham International Festival of Music. More recently the group premiered *Names of the Dead* by Stephen McNeff, a musical memorial for those killed by the conflict in Irag, written work for voices and string quartet.

In 2006 the Duke Quartet will be touring the UK with the pianist and composer Rolf Hind as part of his second season as the Artistic Director of SPNM. They will be performing a programme of key repertoire pieces with a work by Rolf himself and new works by the next generation of composers.

**ANDREW RUSSO, piano** – American pianist Andrew Russo is a musical interpreter of uncommon vitality. A versatile artist, both on and off the stage, Russo has made a name for himself through his work with many of today's leading composers in the US and Europe. His career has unfolded around the globe, with appearances in Paris, Tokyo, Leipzig, Brussels and Luxembourg.

Trained classically at the Juilliard School and the Hochschule fur Musik und Theater Mendelssohn in Leipzig, Mr. Russo pursued further specialized training in Paris with Frederic Chiu. In the 2001 Van Cliburn International Piano Competition, Russo created a special and historical moment by performing George Crumb's *A Little Suite For Christmas, A.D. 1979*, making him the first person ever to perform on the inside of the piano in this major quadrennial event. The attraction that this performance spawned led to the development of the 2002 George Crumb Celebration Festival at New York's Angel Orensanz Performing Arts Center on the Lower East Side of Manhattan. Serving as artistic director and pianist for this event, Mr. Russo worked closely with the composer to develop a retrospective structure closely mirroring the trajectory of Mr. Crumb's inimitable career.

A prolific recording artist, Mr. Russo's series of American composer portraits for Black Box includes a 2002 release of Crumb works (BBM 1076) – "Russo is an unquestionable master of Crumb's exotic sound world" (London Independent) – and a 2005 release of John Adams' works (BBM 1098) – "Russo's approach was mesmeric" (Gramophone).

As a recitalist, Mr. Russo's programs frequently feature premieres. In the last two years alone, Russo has given the US premieres of works by Holland's Jacob ter Veldhuis and Gerard Beljon, the French premiere of George Crumb's *Eine Kleine Mitternachtmusik*, and world premieres of works written for Russo by American composers Derek Bermel and Marc Mellits and British composer James Aitchison. In December 2004 Mr. Russo presented the New York premiere of Philippe Manoury's monumental *Pluton* for piano and live electronics with the composer's collaboration.

Mr. Russo also dedicates time to the direction and development of Music Journeys INC, a non-profit foundation which he founded in 2001. Now administrated through Le Moyne College, where Russo is artist-in-residence, the program brings American music to people of all backgrounds through special musical presentations and clinics for

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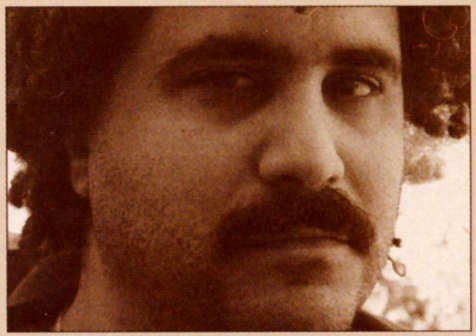
elementary schools in the underprivileged area Syracuse, NY, as well as an eclectic and interactive concert series at Le Moyne College's Coyne Performing Arts Center. It is because of the breadth and diversity of his activities that Gramophone magazine recently proclaimed that: "Andrew Russo is by no means 'just another pianist'".

**MARC MELLITS, composer & pianist** – Marc Mellits was born in Baltimore, Maryland in 1966. He was already composing piano music before he started formal piano lessons at age 6. He went on to study at the Eastman School of Music, Yale School of Music, Cornell University, and Tanglewood. His composition teachers during this period included Samuel Adler, Martin Bresnick, Bernard Rands, Christopher Rouse, Joseph Schwantner, Roberto Sierra, and Steven Stucky, yet one hears other influences in Mellits' music. The sound worlds of Steve Reich – whom Mellits considers a mentor – and Philip Glass resonate inside this music, not to mention the rock and funk music from Marc's childhood in the 1970s. Marc Mellits' voice began to emerge in the early 1990s with works like *Aggravated Assault* – an explosive work for two pianos written during the first Gulf War – *Polysorbate 60* and *Spam. Fruity Pebbles* established Mellits' reputation as 'the witty post-minimalist'. Mellits has found a way to use minimalist techniques without relying on them entirely. He is a miniaturist, composing works that are comprised of short, contrasting movements. His music is eclectic, all-encompassing, open to reflecting whatever enters his life and mind during the period of creation. Mellits has received major commissions from the Kronos String Quartet, Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, Sergio and Odair Assad, Bang On A Can All-Stars, Eliot Fisk, Canadian Brass, Nexus Percussion, Albany Symphony's Dog's Of Desire, and guitarist Dominic Frasca. He remains active within the acclaimed Common Sense Composer's Collective, a group he helped found, which seeks new and alternative ways of collaborating with performers. Mellits also directs and plays keyboards in his own ensemble, the Mellits Consort. He was awarded the prestigious 2004 Foundation for Contemporary Arts Award.



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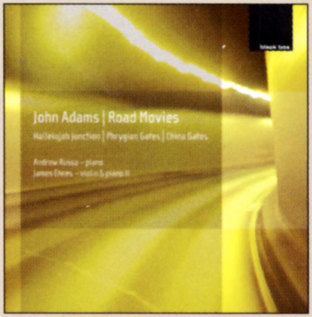


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